

Figure 10.1 How to Organize Negative Messages

Negative messages to clients and customers	Negative messages to superiors	Negative messages to peers and subordinates
<ol style="list-style-type: none">When you have a reason that the audience will understand and accept, give the reason before the refusal.Give the negative information or refusal just once, clearly.Present an alternative or compromise, if one is available.End with a positive, forward-looking statement.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Describe the problem. Tell what's wrong, clearly and unemotionally.Tell how it happened. Provide the background. What underlying factors led to this specific problem?Describe the options for fixing it. If one option is clearly best, you may need to discuss only one. But if your superiors will think of other options, or if different people will judge the options differently, describe all the options, giving their advantages and disadvantages.Recommend a solution and ask for action. Ask for approval so that you can make the necessary changes to fix the problem.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Describe the problem. Tell what's wrong, clearly and unemotionally.Present an alternative or compromise, if one is available. An alternative not only gives the audience another way to get what they want but also suggests that you care about them and helping them meet their needs.If possible, ask for input or action. People in the audience may be able to suggest solutions. And workers who help make a decision are far more likely to accept the consequences.End with a positive, forward-looking statement.

Figure 10.2 A Negative Letter

Vickers
Insurance Company

Negative Information highlighted so reader won't ignore message

**Liability Coverage
Is Being Discontinued—
Here's How to Replace It!**

3373 Forbes Avenue
Rosemont, PA 19010
(215) 572-0100

Negative Alternative

Dear Policyholder:

When your auto insurance is renewed, it will no longer include liability coverage unless you select the new Assurance Plan. Here's why.

Liability coverage is being discontinued. It, and the part of the premium which paid for it, will be dropped from all policies when they are renewed.

This change could leave a gap in your protection. But you can replace the old Liability Coverage with Vickers' new Assurance Plan.

No reason is given. The change probably benefits the company rather than the reader, so it is omitted.

With the new Assurance Plan, you receive benefits for litigation or awards arising from an accident—regardless of who's at fault. The cost for the Assurance Plan at any level is based on the ages of drivers, where you live, your driving record, and other factors. If these change before your policy is renewed, the cost of your Assurance Plan may also change. The actual cost will be listed in your renewal statement.

To sign up for the Assurance Plan, just check the level of coverage you want on the enclosed form and return it in the postage-paid envelope within 14 days. You'll be assured of the coverage you select.

Forward-looking ending emphasizes reader's choice

Sincerely,

C. J. Morgan

C. J. Morgan
President

P.S. The Assurance Plan protects you against possible legal costs arising from an accident. Sign up for the plan today and receive full coverage from Vickers.

Figure 10.3 A Negative Memo to Subordinates

FIRST BANK
Great Plains, Nebraska
Memo

Date: January 10, 2012
To: All Employees
From: Floyd E. Mattson **FEM**

Subject: Group Dental Insurance

First Bank is always seeking to provide employees with a competitive benefits package that meets their needs.

In response to many requests, the Human Resource Department solicited bids for expanded dental coverage. At this time none of the responses from insurers serving our area are affordable for us. We continue to negotiate, but with costs rising at 20% per year, success seems unlikely. Other banks in the area are in a similar situation, so our current benefits package matches or exceeds what they offer.

Reason given before negative
Positive

First Bank continues to offer enrollment in an employee-funded group plan with ABC Dental. The coverage includes 37 dentists in our county and pays 50 percent of allowable fees. Many of our employees have found this coverage helpful. Employees also may use their medical savings account for dental care. Consider one of these options for the present, and First Bank will continue to investigate new opportunities for expanded coverage.

Alternatives
Positive
close